

“It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth”: Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God

*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth
as it is in heaven.*

Andrew F. Ehat

In the last issue of *BYU Studies*, D. Michael Quinn presented for the first time a chronology of the Council of Fifty that annihilates the previously held theory that this Council was one of the most important institutions in nineteenth-century Mormon history.¹ Formally organized by Joseph Smith on 11 March 1844, just three months before he was murdered at Carthage, Illinois, the Council of Fifty was his concrete description of the millennial government of God. In his article, Quinn gave an overview of the organization, officers, activity, and meaning of the Prophet's Council of Fifty and presented insight into some of the internal political doctrine that guided Council meetings. However, he did not present or analyze the governing directive of the Council: The Constitution of the Kingdom of God. Nor did he discuss all the parliamentary procedures of the Kingdom that illustrate the theoretical rights, powers, and limitations of its officers and members. The purpose of this article then is to show that internal nature, role, and organization of Joseph Smith's "Kingdom of God."

Admittedly, this study will appear more like a theological treatise, but considering Quinn's research, there seems little else significant to say about the external chronology of the Council of Fifty. Using materials Quinn apparently did not see, I will do three things in this article that he did not do in his. First, I will provide an

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¹D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945," *Brigham Young University Studies* 20 (Winter 1980): 163-97.

answer to the question he raised in his article: Why did Joseph Smith wait two years after he received the revelation authorizing the existence of the Council of Fifty to actually organize it?² Second, although Quinn discussed the importance of 7 April 1842, the date the Lord revealed the official name of the Council, as well as the dates various Council members gave for its formal organization two years later (namely, 10, 11, and 13 March 1844), there is one date he did not discuss. I will show that the 18 April 1844 meeting of the Council of Fifty was, without any question, the most important one in its organizational development, because it was on that date Joseph Smith finalized all the theoretical features of the Kingdom of God. And, third, I will present excerpts from William Clayton's journals to demonstrate the essentially spiritual, theological, and nonmilitant role of the Council of Fifty.

WHY DID JOSEPH SMITH WAIT
FROM 7 APRIL 1842 UNTIL 18 APRIL 1844?

According to Daniel 2:44–45, the Lord must take the first step in establishing his Kingdom: the stone that is to roll forth and consume all other nations has to be cut out of the mountain without hands—that is, by God. The first step to coalesce the randomly scattered and partially developed themes of the Kingdom fostered within the Church priesthood organization appears to be the revelation to Joseph Smith on 7 April 1842.³ On this date the full title of the Kingdom was revealed.

Verily thus saith the Lord, This is the name by which you shall be called, The Kingdom of God and His Laws, with the Keys and power thereof, and judgment in the hands of his servants, Ahman Christ.⁴

No other government has had such a prestigious title. Furthermore, to show the stark contrast between the ideals of government hinted at in this title and those operating upon the earth, Joseph Smith began to teach that man's attempts at government had come woefully short both in principle and in practice.

In July 1842, three months after receiving this revelation, Joseph Smith published an essay in the *Times and Seasons* entitled "The

²Ibid, pp. 164–65.

³Joseph F. Smith Minutes of the Council of Fifty, 10 April 1880, used by special permission. Since 1957, a typed version of these minutes has been available at Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. The typescript does not give any source. Though there are minor errors in the typescript, the date given for the revelation is correct.

⁴See entry in William Clayton journal for 1 January 1845 included with this article. There are many other sources for this text, but Clayton seems to be copying from the original minutes which were in his possession.

Government of God.”⁵ In it he said the governments of men “have failed in all their attempts to promote eternal power, peace and happiness. . . . [Even] our nation, which possesses greater resources than any other, is rent, from center to circumference, with party strife, political intrigues, and sectional interest.”⁶ Joseph Smith called Isaiah 33:22 the political motto of ancient Israel (and note how unmistakably close to the revealed name of the Council of Fifty this motto is): “The Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our King; and He shall reign over us.”⁷ To bring about this ideal state of things, the Prophet said great confusion and destruction would have to occur throughout the world. “The world has had a fair trial for six thousand years; the Lord will try the seventh thousand Himself.”⁸ Though he did not give many details of the ancient government of God, Joseph Smith did say the following:

The government was a theocracy; they had God to make their laws, and men chosen by Him to administer them. . . . [They were led] in both civil and ecclesiastical affairs. . . . So will it be when the purposes of God shall be accomplished: when “The Lord shall be King over the whole earth” and “Jerusalem His throne.” “The law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”⁹

This is a preciously limited description of Joseph Smith’s precise ideas of the nature of the Kingdom and he knew it, for he said a month later: “I have the whole plan of the Kingdom before me, and no other person has.”¹⁰

Other theological developments that year have a specific bearing on the organization of the Kingdom of God. In May of 1842 Joseph Smith introduced the “temple endowment” and anointed nine men *to become hereafter kings and priests*.¹¹ Consistent with John the Revelator, Joseph Smith anointed them “Kings and priests . . . [who] *shall* reign on the earth [during the Millennium].”¹² However, in September of 1843, a year later, Joseph Smith did attend to the temple ordinances that actually made mortals “kings and priests.” Joseph Smith on 27 August 1843, a month before first administering these ordinances, taught that this ordination as a “king and priest” conferred the ultimate, legitimate power of government.

⁵This editorial is reprinted in full in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1967), pp. 248–54.

⁶Ibid., p. 249.

⁷Ibid., p. 252.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B.H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1932–1951), 5:139. Hereafter referred to as *HC*.

¹¹*HC*, 5:1–2.

¹²Revelation 20:5–6; italics supplied.

Those holding the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings. In fact, that Priesthood is a perfect law of theocracy and stands as God to give laws to the people.¹³

Joseph Smith in this discourse also indicated that he had not as yet conferred on any man in the Church the fulness of the priesthood ordinances whereby they were made kings and priests.¹⁴

On 28 September 1843 Joseph Smith inaugurated these higher ordinances in which he ordained men kings and priests.¹⁵ And in the ensuing five months he conferred them on twenty other men.¹⁶ For it was the “dispensation of the fulness of the priesthood” that Joseph Smith felt was the mission he was to accomplish.¹⁷ Hence, it should not be surprising that with one exception all the men upon whom the fulness had been conferred by February 1844 were initiated into the original Council of Fifty on 11 March of that year.¹⁸ Therefore, in the period between May 1842 (and more particularly September 1843) and February 1844, the organization of the Kingdom of God awaited Joseph Smith’s unfolding of temple theology.

Thus the two-year lapse between 7 April 1842 (the date the founding revelation of the Council was received) and 11 March 1844 (the date the Council was actually organized) exists because Joseph Smith delayed organizing this Council until after he had unfolded all temple ordinances.

These ordinances he claimed conferred ultimate priesthood authority upon men. When men were ordained kings and priests and thereby received the fulness of the priesthood, they were “given . . .

¹³Smith, *Teachings*, p. 322.

¹⁴See undated entry in manuscript entitled “Scriptural Items,” which matches other manuscript versions of Joseph Smith’s 27 August 1843 discourse found in the Library–Archives of the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church Office Building, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter referred to as Church Archives). I have determined that this manuscript is in the hand of Franklin D. Richards, who in 1849 became an apostle of the Church. See also Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1968), 124:28 (hereafter referred to as D&C), and Brigham Young’s comments three weeks before Joseph Smith’s discourse, found in HC, 5:527.

¹⁵Joseph Smith Diary, kept by Willard Richards, 28 September 1843, Church Archives.

¹⁶The twenty men were Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, Newel K. Whitney, William Marks, John Taylor, John Smith, Reynolds Cahoon, Alpheus Cutler, Orson Spencer, Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, George A. Smith, Levi Richards, Cornelius P. Lott, William W. Phelps, Isaac Morley and Orson Pratt. This is based on my “Summary of Data on the Individuals Who Received the Endowment Before Ordinance Work Began in the Nauvoo Temple,” privately distributed.

¹⁷HC, 5:140, or Smith, *Teachings*, p. 258.

¹⁸The exception was Isaac Morley, who was not initiated into the Council of Fifty until 1 March 1845. With only two exceptions, all the additional men on whom Joseph Smith conferred the Endowment but not the Fulness of the Priesthood ordinances were also initiated into the Council of Fifty. These men were as follows: George Miller, Amasa Lyman, Lucien Woodworth, John M. Bernhisel, Joseph Fielding, William Clayton, and John P. Greene. The only exceptions are Samuel H. Smith (who died in August 1844) and Joseph Young (who did not become a member of the Council of Fifty until 1 March 1845), Ehat, “Endowment Data Summary.”

all that could be given to man on the earth.’’¹⁹ With the restoration of this fundamental source of legitimacy, the Kingdom of God could be reestablished. For, from the Mormon point of view, governments which had apostatized from that dominion the Lord gave Adam had usurped authority and annulled their priesthood. Hence, worldly kings anointed by priests who had no priesthood power ultimately did not have legitimate right to reign.²⁰ It is no wonder then that the official name of the Council, “The Kingdom of God and His Laws . . . ,” when condensed to its “Key Word”—“Ahman Christ”—means, according to the Mormon lexicon, “God Anointed Ones” (see D&C 95:17; 116).

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE 18 APRIL 1844 MEETING?

With this theological overview, we are ready to discuss the meaning of the 18 April 1844 meeting of the Kingdom of God. Regarding this meeting, William Clayton records in his journal that the individuals “who have been called upon to form the grand K. of G.” were called by revelation. This principle was echoed in a revelation to John Taylor 27 June 1882:

And now I speak unto you who are members of this Council and my Kingdom, I say unto you, as I said unto my disciples of old, Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you. I called you by my servant, Joseph [Smith], and by my servant, Brigham [Young], and by my servant, John [Taylor].²¹

This calling included the three nonmembers of the Church who were members of the Council of Fifty: Uriah Brown, Edward Bonney, and Merinus G. Eaton. For, according to the above revelation given to John Taylor, the Lord said: “I moved upon [Joseph Smith] to introduce into my Kingdom certain parties not in my Church.”²² With the ultimate source of representation of God on earth inherent in the priesthood, having only Church members rule would not be fair in a plural society unless, as stated in this 1882 revelation, nonmembers of the Church “be admitted to the right of representation . . . and have

¹⁹Heber C. Kimball Journal kept by William Clayton, 26 December 1845, Church Archives.

²⁰In light of this it should be pointed out that the Mormons, nevertheless, had been cautioned by revelation to be content with pluralism: “Be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign” (D&C 58:22). To Mormons this was not evidence of a patronizing God. He had revealed that he had not only countenanced but had also inspired the Constitution of the United States. There was to be no contradiction: “For he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land” (D&C 58:21).

²¹Revelation dated 27 June 1882 in notebook collection of John Taylor revelations; notebook given to Annie Taylor Hyde (daughter of John Taylor) by Emma Smith Woodruff (wife of Wilford Woodruff); xerox of holograph, Church Archives.

²²Ibid.

full and free opportunity of presenting their views, interests and principles, and enjoying all the freedom and rights of the Council.’’²³

The leaders of the Council of Fifty did not consider the presence of nonmembers of the Church as members of the Council to be a dilution of its priesthood undergirdings. Rather, they accepted what Joseph Smith had taught them, namely, that in the initial stages of the Millennium the Council would participate in concert with men of differing religious and political persuasions. Apparently the highest ranking representative(s) of non-Mormon political systems would be invited to come and present the “views, interests and principles” of their constituency. In December 1842, the Prophet had interpolated the Book of Revelation phrase “reign on earth” to mean “reign over the earth.” He explained that immortal men, including Christ, would not dwell permanently on the earth but would only visit it during the Millennium. Day-to-day government would therefore be left to mortals. Furthermore, Joseph Smith explained the earth would still have a pluralism of governments and religions in the early part of those thousand years:

There will be wicked men on the earth during the thousand years. The heathen nations who will not come up [to Jerusalem] to worship will be visited with the judgments of God [e.g., “no rain” (Zechariah 14:17)] and must eventually be destroyed from the earth.²⁴

Because the Kingdom of God was conceived of God it could be a government of a plural society without prostituting its principles. The way that such an apparently unrealizable ideal could be achieved was what Joseph Smith made known during the 18 April 1844 meeting.

When the Prophet began the meeting, he initiated Joseph W. Coolidge and David S. Hollister and then added Lyman Wight’s name to the list of members. The Council then had a total of fifty men sitting in the circle. With that accomplished, Joseph Smith announced: “Now we have the number which the Lord requires—[but] we will take a few more on our own hook.”²⁵ The term “Council of Fifty” then became the familiar name of “The Kingdom of God and His Laws . . .” when it was mentioned in public. Although the name “Council of Fifty” has been considered by scholars merely as a

²³Ibid.

²⁴Smith, *Teachings*, pp. 268–69.

²⁵Leonard John Nuttall Minutes of the Council of Fifty, 12 October 1880, used by special permission; hereafter referred to as Minutes followed by date. Subsequent to the 18 April 1844 meeting, William Smith and Jedediah M. Grant were included in the pre-martyrdom Council, much in the same manner as alternates are called into the Church’s priesthood organization—the “High Council”; alternate councilors are officially called in case regular members of the High Council are absent.

nickname,²⁶ as seen here it was an essential feature of the Council to have a particular size and hence this official title.

Joseph Smith next asked the committee assigned the responsibility of drafting the Constitution of the Kingdom of God to report their progress. Although this committee had not been organized until a week before the 18 April 1844 meeting, the Council from the very beginning had considered drafting a constitution. At the first of two 10 March 1844 preliminary organizational meetings, Joseph Smith had assigned the entire Council the task of amending the Constitution of the United States to become the “voice of Jehovah.”²⁷ At the 11 April meeting, Joseph Smith had given the assignment to a committee of three. During the week the committee had tried to draft the constitution. Though the Prophet had not been at the meeting of the “Committee of the council” in the afternoon of 14 April, he too during the week had attempted to help draft the document.²⁸

Committeeman John Taylor reported to the Council that the committee had “worked & strove to get up such a constitution as would suit our feelings” but could not do it. The Prophet then told the Council that he knew they could not draft a constitution worthy of guiding the Kingdom of God,²⁹ and that he had gone before the Lord and had received the Constitution by direct revelation:

Ye are my Constitution and I am your God and ye are my spokesmen, therefore from henceforth keep my commandments.³⁰

Though this statement may seem short and more on the order of a preamble to a constitution, Council members viewed it quite differently. John Taylor said:

These words are pregnant with meaning & full of intelligence & point out our position in regard to these matters—it is expected of us that [we] can act right—that our interests [are] bound up in the K[ingdom] of God. That we should consider we are not acting for ourselves, but that we are the Spokesmen of God selected for that purpose in the interest of God & to bless & exalt all humanity. We acknowledge him as our God and all men who enter this body must acknowledge him here. There is a peculiar [*sic*] significance to these things which needs some consideration.³¹

²⁶Hyrum L. Andrus, *Joseph Smith and World Government* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1958), pp. 3–4; Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University, 1967), p. 61; and Quinn, “The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945,” p. 169.

²⁷Joseph Smith Diary, 10 March 1844, Church Archives.

²⁸Joseph Smith Diary, 14 April 1844, and HC, 6:333.

²⁹Minutes, 8 April 1881.

³⁰Joseph F. Smith Minutes of the Council of Fifty, 21 April 1880. See note 3.

³¹Minutes, 8 April 1881.

Orson Pratt in regard to this has said:

In the Church we take the Law of God & his Priesthood as the Constitution of his Church—here in this Council we have a living constitution not a written one—which we must conform to.³²

The implicit breadth of this constitution was staggering to Council members. The Constitution of the Kingdom subsumes those political principles of mankind consistent with Judeo-Christian-Mormon scriptures. Analogous to this is the case of the strikingly similar constitutional monarchy of Great Britain. Its unwritten constitution is the sum total of all the basic legislation developed over the centuries since the Magna Carta of 1215. Joseph Smith was serious then when he said, “We should gather all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them up, or we shall not come out true ‘Mormons.’ ”³³ “One of the grand fundamental principles of ‘Mormonism’ is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may.”³⁴

This brief constitution may imply that the Council operated in loose and chaotic fashion. However, order in the Council was assured by certain parliamentary procedures that were also finalized in the 18 April 1844 meeting. Given the unwritten nature of the Constitution of the Kingdom, these parliamentary procedures consequently take on constitutional proportions.

THE RULES OF THE KINGDOM

1. The Council is convened and organized by the President of the Church subject to the rules of the Kingdom of God. He is elected standing chairman upon convening of the Council.
2. Members of the Council sit according to age, except the chairman.
3. According to the order of voting in the Council, a recorder and a clerk of the Kingdom are elected. The clerk takes the minutes of the meeting and the recorder enters the approved minutes into the official records of the Kingdom. They are voting members though they do not occupy a seat in the circle.
4. All motions are presented to the Council by or through the standing chairman. All motions must be submitted in writing.
5. To pass, a motion must be unanimous in the affirmative. Voting is done after the ancient order: each person voting in turn from the oldest to the youngest member of the Council, commencing with the standing chairman. If any Council member has any objections he is

³²Minutes, 12 October 1880.

³³Smith, *Teachings*, p. 316.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 313.

under covenant to fully and freely make them known to the Council. But if he cannot be convinced of the rightness of the course pursued by the Council he must either yield or withdraw membership in the Council. Thus a man will lose his place in the Council if he refuses to act in accordance with righteous principles in the deliberations of the Council. After action is taken and a motion accepted, no fault will be found or change sought for in regard to the motion.

6. Before a man can be accepted as a member of the Council his name must be presented to the members and voted upon unanimously in the affirmative. When invited into the Council he must covenant by uplifted hand to maintain all things of the Council inviolate agreeable to the order of the Council. Before he accepts his seat he must also agree to accept the name, constitution and rules of order and conduct of the Council.

7. No member is to be absent from any meeting unless sick or on Council business. If this were not the case, rule five could be invoked to invalidate any action of the Council.

8. A member can be assigned to only one committee of the Council at a time.

9. Adjournment and specific date of reconvening the Council are determined by vote. The Council may be called together sooner at the discretion of the chairman. If the Council adjourns without a specific meeting date (*sine die*), it next meets only at the call of the standing chairman (or new President of the Church, if applicable).³⁵

Beginning with rule number two, I shall discuss the implications of the most important rules of order of the Council. The most conspicuous feature of William Clayton's journal entry for 18 April 1844 is that he lists each of the members (except for the officers of the Council) according to age. Joseph Smith explained nearly a year before: "The way to get along in any important matters was to gather unto yourself wise men, experienced & aged men to assist in council in all times of trouble."³⁶ This rule of order seems to have followed precedent established earlier by Joseph Smith in connection with the priesthood organization of the Church. When the Council of the Twelve Apostles was organized in 1834, Joseph Smith instructed them "to take their seats together according to age, the oldest to be seated at the head."³⁷ They even spoke in order from the oldest to the youngest.³⁸ While seniority by ordination date

³⁵This is a compilation of descriptive statements of the rules of order scattered throughout the minutes of the Council of Fifty. I have prepared a typescript of these minutes and corresponding diary entries and expect to publish this compilation in the future.

³⁶Wilford Woodruff Journal, 14 May 1843, Church Archives. See also Smith, *Teachings*, p. 299.

³⁷B.H. Roberts has observed "that this arrangement had reference only to the first organization of the quorum of the Twelve. After this first arrangement, the brethren of that quorum held and now hold their place in it and preside according to seniority of ordination, not of age." For further details see note in *HC*, 2:219–20. Cf. D&C 124:129.

³⁸*Times and Seasons* 6 (15 April 1845): 869.

eventually replaced seniority by age in the Council of the Twelve, in the Council of Fifty seniority was determined strictly by age. Ecclesiastical rank, except in the case of the President of the Church, had no bearing on standing in the Council. For example, the President of the Twelve Apostles, Brigham Young, was ranked twenty-third in the Council of Fifty.

Alphabetical lists of the Council of Fifty do not suggest this rule of order which gave rise to tensions within the Council.³⁹ Of particular interest is the case of Lyman Wight. Eldest of the Twelve Apostles, he first took his seat in the Council of Fifty on 3 May 1844. He was ranked sixteenth—ahead of all his fellow apostles.⁴⁰ When Brigham Young, after the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, did not enthusiastically renew Wight's mission to Texas that had been arranged by the 1844 Council of Fifty, Lyman Wight rebelled and took a company of Saints away anyway. So when the Council appointed the President of the presiding quorum of the Church, President Brigham Young, as Standing Chairman of the Council of Fifty on 4 February 1845, Apostle Wight was on his way to Texas and was not present to sanction the action. This may in part explain why after August 1846 following the death of Samuel Bent, who was ranked second, Lyman Wight refused to accept Brigham Young's election as standing chairman. He repeatedly stated that "nobody under the light of the heavens except Joseph Smith or John Smith, the president of the Fifty, could call him from Texas."⁴¹ Since John Smith was ranked third in Joseph Smith's Council, Lyman Wight considered John Smith and not Brigham Young "president of the Fifty." Wight's interpretation of succession in the Council was certainly self-serving. For in the Council of the Twelve Apostles he was responsible to President Brigham Young, but in the Council of Fifty he thought his age gave him advantage, justifying his rebellion against Brigham Young's authority. Because he attended only at most three of the seventeen Council of Fifty meetings held during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, possibly Lyman Wight did not know or forgot the rule that age seniority did not determine who was to be standing chairman. That office was always to be filled by the President of the Church.

³⁹For example, the Joseph F. Smith Minutes of the Council of Fifty (referred to in notes 3 and 30) for 10 and 21 April 1880 included a listing of members. Joseph F. Smith originally listed them according to age. The individual who typed the BYU Special Collections copy of these minutes reshuffled the names into alphabetical order. William Clayton's lists for 18 April 1844 and 4 February 1845 are in order of age. So are the lists kept by Joseph F. Smith in his journal under the dates of 10 April, 12 October and 31 December 1880 and 8 April 1881, Church Archives.

⁴⁰HC, 6:351; Joseph Smith Diary and Willard Richards Diary, both for 3 May 1844, Church Archives.

⁴¹Heman Hale Smith, "The Lyman Wight Colony in Texas, 1846-1858," p. 21, typewritten manuscript, BYU Special Collections. See Abraham H. Cannon Journal, 4 April 1894, BYU Special Collections.

Wight's thinking carried a step further could have made it possible for nonmember of the Church Uriah Brown, ranked fifth, to have succeeded to the "presidency," leaving even Lyman Wight in a quandary.

But this seniority rule certainly is not the most important of the rules governing the Council. Without any question rule number five was the most important one to members of the Council. All the perplexing questions raised about government in general and theocracy in particular were answered by this rule. It eased their own anxiety regarding Joseph Smith's intentions in establishing a theocracy. It qualified the meaning of the action of the 11 April 1844 meeting when Joseph Smith was anointed "Prophet, Priest and King" of the Council. Because of this rule Council members did not feel that they were bound to the "fanciful revelations of Joe Smith, whether right or wrong," as anti-Mormons claimed. This rule satisfied members of the Council that they were involved in a theodemocratic republican form of government and not a theocratic tyranny. Rule five was the unique answer to the inevitable clash between majority and minority rights. It guaranteed freedom of speech and encouraged the right of dissent. To them this rule blended divine sovereignty and popular sovereignty.

As in the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the Kingdom of God empowers the "government of God" in its legislative capacity more than in any other branch of power. The standing chairman does have veto power, but no more than other members. He too is subject to the same rules of righteousness in exercising his franchise. "If I esteem mankind to be in error, shall I bear them down?" asked Joseph Smith. "No. I will lift them up, *and in their own way too*, if I cannot persuade them my way is better; and I will not seek to compel any man to believe as I do, only by the force of reasoning, for truth will cut its own way."⁴² Joseph Smith felt that these liberal sentiments could be enacted through the agency of the Council of Fifty. The miracle of fifty men coming to a unanimous decision would make them "spokesmen" of God. According to the theory, if fifty men seek in candor and order to put self and represented interest in perspective with all other points of view and are committed to find the locus where the best interests of all converge, then the Council will have found the will of God. This unanimous decision clause in rule five is, as in the case of rule number

⁴²Smith, *Teachings*, p. 313; italics supplied.

two, an obvious duplication of the parliamentary procedures of the Church's leading councils.

Every decision made by either of these quorums [the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the Quorum of Seventy] must be by the unanimous voice of the same; that is, every member in each quorum must be agreed to its decisions in order to make their decisions of the same power or validity one with the other. . . . Unless this is the case, their decisions are not entitled to the same blessings which the decisions of a quorum of three presidents anciently. . . . The decisions of these quorums . . . are to be made in all righteousness, in holiness, and lowliness of heart, meekness and long suffering, and in faith, and virtue, and knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity; because the promise is, if these things abound in them they shall not be unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord.⁴³

Therefore the chairman would not resort to "revelation" unless the Council was at a stalemate. The desire of the nonmembers of the Church in the Council to avoid revelation as the final say would certainly be a compelling force for unanimity. It could then be argued that the voting procedure in practice would merely be majority rule. Certainly this is so. The key, of course, is whether members of the Council would seriously consider the interests of all in their deliberations. As John Taylor saw it, only in seeking the good of all could they fulfill the implications of their "constitution." One factor that would contribute to realization of this lofty goal is the covenant (rule number five) that if objections existed to any legislation they had to be voiced.

Because the leadership of the Church handpicked the men to fill the Council of Fifty, one could argue that true freedom of expression did not exist in the Council. Yet one cannot escape the impression of total honesty and unintimidated expression actually practiced in the meetings. For example, when, in 1880, the Council discussed the stand the People's Party should take on the question of taxes in support of the public school system in Utah Territory, both George Q. Cannon and Wilford Woodruff opposed the move because it would require the removal of the Church's scriptures from the curriculum. (Taxes had not been used to an appreciable extent in the territorial

⁴³Joseph Smith on 12 February 1834 said he would explain "the order in which a Council ought to be conducted" for the first time since the organization of the Church. He said, "In ancient days Councils were conducted with such strict propriety, that no one was allowed to whisper, be weary, leave the room, or get uneasy in the least, until the voice of the Lord, by revelation, or by the voice of the council by the Spirit was obtained: which has not been [p. 28] observed in this church to the present. It was understood in ancient days, that if one man could stay in Council another could, and if the president could spend his time, the members could also. But in our councils, generally, one would be uneasy, another sleep, one praying another not; one's mind on the business of the council and another thinking on something else &c." ("Kirtland Council Minute Book," pp. 27-28, Church Archives; published in Smith, *Teachings*, p. 69.)

school system before this.) It might be surprising to us that Daniel H. Wells, former member of the First Presidency and then a councilor to the Twelve Apostles, recommended rather liberal views. He suggested that the Latter-day Saint children receive a more secular education and be taught the scriptures at home “without crowding them into the 6 hours of the school day.” Echoing the fundamental principles of the Council, Daniel H. Wells concluded, “This looks to me as good statesmanship & be providing for all the people.” There were no rebuttals to his comments. John Taylor agreed that “there does seem to be an unfairness in using other people’s money for our schools . . . we can afford to do right.”⁴⁴ This is only one example, but it confirms the whole tenor of the Council minutes: the leaders of the Council of Fifty practiced what they preached. The minutes breathe openness and candor without vindictiveness or unkindness. If the Mormons felt so committed to this freedom of expression in the Council, we can expect that the gentiles would feel even more so.

A six percent representation of the overwhelming gentile population does not seem to be good mathematics on the part of Joseph Smith if he expected the Council soon to be in control of the world. Having only three nonmembers in the original Council of Fifty seems a poor representation. But Joseph Smith told the younger members of the Council—Benjamin F. Johnson, Erastus Snow, and George A. Smith—always to remember the example he had set. Then when they were “hoary with age” they would maintain alive the principle of gentile representation in the Council of Fifty should the day come in *their* lifespan that the Kingdom of God would be established in power and glory.⁴⁵ Given the Mormon expectation that at the beginning of the Millennium a plural society will exist and that nonmembers of the Church will have fair representation, theoretically the proportion of nonmembers in the Council will then be considerably higher than it was in Nauvoo. Under such conditions, gentiles in the Council of Fifty will not feel their position to be so tenuous.⁴⁶

Therefore, it was not the specific projects of Joseph Smith’s Council of Fifty that so excited its members. It was his theories and doctrines that arrested their attention. For it did not escape them

⁴⁴Minutes, 12 October 1880.

⁴⁵*I Knew the Prophets—An Analysis of the Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George F. Gibbs, Reporting Doctrinal Views of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young*, ed. Dean R. Zimmerman (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1976), p. 19, and William Whittaker Taylor Minutes of the Council of Fifty, 5 April 1882, Church Archives.

⁴⁶Hansen, *Quest for Empire*, p. 37.

that this form of government was not possible under existing world conditions. But an already well-developed apocalyptic outlook helped keep the notions alive. First, the Church would gain in influence and respect with the world.⁴⁷ Second, the chaos of a disintegrating world would drive people to the Ensign of the Latter-day Saints, saying: We don't care about your religion; but you are a good people, and you have a just and stable government with which we would be willing to cooperate.⁴⁸ Then lastly, cataclysmic events would elect the Saints as governors of the earth.⁴⁹

With all these principles finalized on 18 April 1844, surely it is no wonder William Clayton rejoiced: "Much precious instructions were given, and it seems like heaven began on earth and the power of God is with us." As will be seen in the following entries from Clayton's journals, his childlike faith in the revelations on the Council of Fifty to Joseph Smith was implicit and complete. They demonstrate the spiritual other-worldly orientation of Council proceedings and its role when it came into contact with the world.⁵⁰

EXCERPTS FROM THE JOURNALS OF WILLIAM CLAYTON

Sunday, March 10 [1844]. ... Evening attended Council with the First Presidency and the Twelve on important business arising from a letter from the Pine Country. Bro., W. Richards was appointed Chairman and myself, was appointed Clerk.

Monday, March 11. In Council again all day—as last night many great and glorious ideas were advanced, we had a very profitable time. We organized into a Council and I was admitted a member. I will here name whose names were put on the list of members of this important organization: Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, W. Richards, P.P. Pratt, O. Pratt, J. Taylor, H.C. Kimball, G.A. Smith, W.W. Phelps, L. Woodworth, G. Miller, A. Badlam, P. Haws, Erastus Snow, R. Cahoon, Amos Fielding, A. Cutler, Levi Richards, N.K. Whitney, J.M. Bernhisel, L.D. Wason myself ...

Wednesday March 13. ... At 11 the Council was called together, ... P.M. in council again, also in the evening O. Hyde, W. Woodruff, and James Emmett were admitted members. The Pres. appointed W. Richards Recorder, and me the Clerk of the Kingdom.

⁴⁷D&C 105:23–32.

⁴⁸D&C 45:66–71; *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1855–1886), 21:8.

⁴⁹This theme is so abundant in Judeo-Christian-Mormon scriptures that it is impossible to list here all the passages dealing with the Apocalypse. See Ezekiel 37–39, Zechariah 14 and Malachi 4 in the Old Testament; Matthew 24 and Revelation in the New Testament; 1 Nephi 13–14 and 3 Nephi 21 of the Book of Mormon; and finally sections 1, 43, 45, 77, 87 and 133 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

⁵⁰William Clayton kept three volumes of journal in Nauvoo, Illinois, covering the years 1842–1845, 1843–1844, and 1845–1846. The extracts used in this article were made by L. John Nuttall in the 1880s. L. John Nuttall was William Clayton's successor as "Clerk of the Kingdom," hence Nuttall's interest in compiling these extracts. This fifteen page manuscript is entitled "Extracts from the Journal of Elder Wm Clayton, regarding the K. of G." and is located in the Church Archives.

Thursday March 14. In Council all day again

Tuesday March 19. At the Council meeting, S. Bent, Uriah Brown, Samuel James, John D. Parker, O.P. Rockwell, Sidney Rigdon, Wm Marks and O. Spencer were admitted members.

Thursday, April 4. In Council of the Kingdom. Eleven Lamanites⁵¹ appeared and wanted council. We had a very pleasant and impressive interview.

Thursday, April 11. ... Afterwards in the Council. We had a glorious interview. Pres. J. was voted our P. P. & K.⁵² with loud Hosannas.

Thursday April 18. ... At 9 met in Council. This day Pres. J. introduced J.W. Coolidge and D.S. Hollister and added L. Wight's name, and then declared the council full. The names as they now stand of those who have been called upon to form the grand K. of G. by revelation are as follows:

1. Prest J. Smith. Standing Chairman

2. Samuel Bent	65	27. P.B. Lewis	40
3. John Smith	62	28. Elias Smith	39
4. Alpheus Cutler	60	29. O Hyde	39
5. Uriah Brown	59	30. Saml James	38
6. Reynolds Cahoon	54	31. W. Woodruff	37
7. Ezra Thayre	53	32. P.P. Pratt	36
8. Wm W. Phelps	52	33. Edwd Bonny	36
9. Amos Fielding	51	34. D.D. Yearsley	36
10. Wm Marks	51	35. D.S. Hollister	35
11. Sidney Rigdon	51	36. John Taylor	35
12. John P. Green	51	37. Alex Badlam	35
13. Geo Miller	50	38. C.C. Rich	34
14. N.K. Whitney	49	39. G.J. Adams	33
15. Peter Haws	48	40. Orson Pratt	33
16. Jos. Fielding	46	41. M.G. Eaton	32
17. C.P. Lott	45	42. A. Babbet	31
18. Levi Richards	44	43. A. Lyman	30
19. J.M. Bernhisel	44	44. J.W. Coolidge	30
20. J.D. Parker	44	45. O.P. Rockwell	29
21. H. Smith	44	46. G.A. Smith	26
22. L. Woodworth	44	47. E. Snow	25
23. B. Young	42	48. L.D. Wason	24
24. H.C. Kimball	42	49. B.F. Johnson	24
25. O. Spencer	42	50. W. Clayton	Clerk
26. J. Emmett	41	51. W. Richards	Recorder,
		52. L. Wight	

During the day much precious instructions were given, and it seems like heaven began on earth and the power of God is with us.

⁵¹The Book of Mormon term for the American Indians.

⁵²Prophet, Priest and King. See Smith, *Teachings*, p. 318 where Joseph Fielding Smith was the first to publish Joseph Smith's Diary for the date of 23 July 1843. See also *HC*, 5:510, 512, 513 and 523.

Thursday. April 25th In Council all day. Adjourned sine die

Saturday June 22. Joseph whispered and told me either to put the r. of K. into the hands of some faithful man and send them away, or burn them, or bury them. I concluded to bury them, which I did immediately on my return home.

Sunday. August 18. At the Office copying the Record of the Kingdom

Friday. Sept 6 At the Temple all day copying Records of the Kingdom

Reflections. Jan. 1st 1845

. . . The organization of the Kingdom of God on 11th March last is one important event. This organization was called the Council of Fifty or Kingdom of God, and was titled by revelation as follows, "Verily thus saith the Lord, this is the name by which you shall be called, the Kingdom of God and his Laws, with the Keys and power thereof, and judgment in the hands of his servants, Ahman Christ." In this Council was the plan arranged for supporting Pres. Jos. Smith as a candidate for the presidency of the U.S. Prest Joseph was the standing chairman of the council and myself the Clerk. In this Council was also devised the plan of establishing an emigration to Texas, and plans laid for the exaltation of a standard and ensign of truth for the nations of the earth. In this council was the plan devised to restore the Ancients⁵³ to the Knowledge of the truth and the restoration of Union and peace amongst ourselves. In this Council was Prest Joseph chosen our Prophet, Priest and King by Hosannas. In this Council was the principles of eternal truth rolled forth to the heavens without reserve and the hearts of the servants of God made to rejoice exceedingly.

Tuesday Feby. 4. 1845 Met at the 70s Hall with the Council of the Kingdom. There were only 25 members present viz: B. Young, S. Bent, John Smith, Alpheus Cutler, R. Cahoon, W.W. Phelps, G. Miller, P. Haws, Josh Fielding, Levi Richards, J.D. Parker, L. Woodworth, H.C. Kimball, O. Spencer, P.B. Lewis, D.D. Yearsley, C.C. Rich, O. Pratt, A. Lyman, J. W. Coolidge, O.P. Rockwell, G.A. Smith, E. Snow, and Wd Richards and myself. This is the first time we met since the massacre of Pres. Joseph & Hyrum Smith. The Council was reorganized and President B. Young appointed standing chairman as successor to Prest Joseph Smith by unanimous vote. The vote was then taken in ancient order on each one present and all were received by unanimous vote. The vote then passed for absent members according to their ages and stations and resulted as follows, viz: Ezra Thayre, Amos Fielding, N.K. Whitney, C.P. Lott, J.M. Bernhisel, Elias Smith, O. Hyde, W. Woodruff, P.P. Pratt, D.S. Hollister, John Taylor, Wm Smith, A.W. Babbitt, J.M. Grant, and B.F. Johnson were unanimously sustained and received into the new organization. The following were rejected and dropped from the Council: Uriah Brown, Wm Marks, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, James Emmett, Samuel James, Edward Bonny, Alexander Badlam, Geo. J. Adams, Merinus G. Eaton and Lorenzo D. Wasson. President Joseph & Hyrum two of the members were martyred for the truth and John P. Green is dead, so that there is only 40 members left in the Council.

⁵³Namely the "Lamanites" or the American Indians.

It was voted to fill up the Council, at some future time. The weather is extremely cold and the Council adjourned at 2 ½.

Thursday Feby 6. 1845. At the office all day recording minutes of Council. &c

Tuesday. Feb. 11. 1845. At the Office all day copying records of the Kingdom

Wednesday. Feb. 12. 1845. At the office all day copying records of the Kingdom

Saturday. March 1. 1845. At 10 A.M. met at the Seventies Hall in the Council of Fifty. The following brethren were taken into fill up the Quorum viz: Joseph Young, John E. Page, David Fullmer, Theodore Turley, Albert P. Rockwood, Jonathan Dunham, & Lucien R. Foster. They subscribed to the laws of the Council and covenanted before God with uplifted hands to maintain all things inviolate agreeable to the order of the Council. Bros Daniel Spencer, Isaac Morley, and Shadrack Roundy were selected to make up the number of 50, but they were absent and sick. Brother John Pack was admitted to sit in the place of Wilford Woodruff, John D. Lee in the place of Ezra Thayer, and Lewis Dana in place of Amos Fielding they being absent in on business. Lewis Dana is a Lamanite of the Oneida nation, and the First Lamanite who has been admitted a member of any Quorum of the Church.

The object of the Council was to decide whether we shall send out a company of men with Bro. Dana to fill Joseph's measures originally adopted in this Council by going West to seek out a location and a home where the Saints can dwell in peace and health, and where they can erect the ensign and standard of liberty for the nations, and live by the laws of God without being oppressed and mobbed under a tyrannical government, without protection from the laws. Many able speeches were made on the subject, and the Council finally agreed to send out a company with Brother Dana to accomplish this important object. The following brethren were selected and appointed by unanimous vote of the Council, for this mission, viz. Samuel Bent to be the first man and president of the Mission, Jonathan Dunham next, Cyrus Daniels, Daniel Spencer, John S. Fullmer, Charles Shumway, Albert Carrington, and John W. Farnham. These brethren are expected to start immediately after Conference and proceed from tribe to tribe, to unite the Lamanites and find a home for the saints. The Council adjourned in the midst of the best kind of feelings.

Tuesday 4 Mch 1845. ... At 9 oclock met with the council of the Kingdom. We had a very interesting meeting. The subject being the Oregon Mission.

Thursday March 6. 1845. At the Office all day copying records of the Kingdom.

Friday March 7. 1845 As above

Monday Mar. 10. 1845. ... While writing and copying the records of the Kingdom, I was writing these words dropped by Er H.C. Kimball in the council on the 4th inst. viz "if a man step beyond his bounds he will lose his kingdom as Lucifer did and it will be given to others who are more worthy." This idea came to my mind. It has been a doctrine taught by this church that we were in the Grand Council amongst the Gods when the organization of this world was contemplated and that the laws of government were all made and sanctioned by all present and all the ordinances and ceremonies decreed upon. Now is it not the case that the Council of the Kingdom of

God now organized upon this earth are making laws and sanctioning principles which will in part govern the saints after the resurrection, and after death will not these laws be made known by messengers and agents as the gospel was made known to us. And is there not a similarity between this grand council & the council which sat previous to the organization of this world.

Tuesday March 11, 1845. In the Council of Fifty all day. Cyrus Daniels was admitted a member. The subject of writing letters to the Governor's and a number of other subjects were discussed. The subject of the movements of the mob was talked over, and it was considered best for those who are hunted with writs to go on Missions so that we may if possible evade the blow until we can finish the Temple and the Nauvoo House. It was also decided that the workmen on the walls of the Temple commence tomorrow.

Wednesday March 12. At the office all day copying Records of the Kingdom

Friday March 14. At the Office all day chiefly recording records of the Kingdom

Saturday, March 15. A.M. at the Office copying records of the Kingdom

Monday 17. At the office all day chiefly copying records of the Kingdom

Tuesday March 18. 1845. In the Council of Fifty all day. D. Spencer was admitted a member. The subject of the Western mission was most on hand, and all seemed interested fully in it.

Wednesday March 19, 1845. P.M. copying records of the Kingdom.

Thursday 20. At the office all day. A.M. recording tithings, afterwards copying records of the Kingdom.

Saturday March 22, 1845. At the council of the Kingdom all day The Western Mission occupied near all day. The subject of the Nauvoo House, Printing office, Church History and organization of the City were talked over.

Monday March 24, 1845 ... Chiefly recording the minutes of the Council of Fifty.

Tuesday, March 25—1845. At the Council of Fifty all day. The subject of the Nauvoo House, and organization of the City, were the principle topics of conversation

Thursday March 27, 1845 ... At the Office all day copying records of the Kingdom

Tuesday, April 1, 1845. At the office all day, quite unwell, recording minutes of the Kingdom

Saturday April 5. 1845. At 9 at the Seventies Hall with the Council of Fifty but on account of a multitude of business waiting the Council adjourned ~~until~~ without doing business, to next Friday at 8.45

Friday April 11. 1845.. With the Council of Fifty all day taking minutes. Pres. Young appointed J. Dunham, C. Shumway Lorenzo Young to go with Brother Dana on the Western Mission. It was decided to move the printing Office into three lower stories of Masonic Hall and commence the business on a larger scale. The Council all voting to do their utmost to sustain it.

Tuesday April 15, 1845 ... Dined at 12 Oclock with Brother Miller and afterwards rode with him to meet with the Kingdom of God in the upper room of the Seventies Hall. Phineas Young was received into the Council and decided to go with Bros Dana, Dunham and Shumway to the Indian Council at Council Bluffs and thence if they think best to the Pacific Ocean. It was also decided that Bro. Solomon Zundal (Zendal) should go with them to his tribe the Delawares. A letter from Gov. Ford was read giving his advice relative to our policy in organizing the City. He advises to organize the City into corporations of a mile square so as to include the whole surface. He ~~d~~ also recommends to go and establish an independent government in California

Wednesday April 16. 1845 ... P.M. at the Office mostly copying records of the Kingdom

Thursday April 17. 1845 ... Part of the day I was copying records of the Kingdom ... The following verses were composed by Er John Taylor, the Apostle, and revised by him at the Council of the Kingdom on Friday 11th inst.

“The Upper California. O thats the land for me.” &c (See p. 280.)

Monday April 21, 1845 ... Recording minutes of the Kingdom.

Tuesday April 22, 1845. A.M. at the Office recording the minutes of the Kingdom. P.M. attended the Council of the Kingdom. There was not much business done. The brethren are not yet gone west and will probably not start for a day or two.

Thursday April 24, 1845.. At the Office all day recording minutes of the Kingdom

Monday April 28, 1845 ... A.M. recording minutes of the Kingdom

Tuesday April 29. 1845 at 6:30 met the Council of Fifty at the Seventies Hall

Tuesday May 6. 1845. ... Evening met with the Council of Fifty in the Seventies Hall. The principal topic of conversation was the movements of the mob. It appears their determination is to get up an excitement at the Court and they are already trying it by reporting that the Saints are going en masse to Carthage at the Court, and if the Court does not execute the law on the murderers that we intend to destroy the Court and citizens of the County. From reports which the brethren have brought which have been at Carthage the mob are laying deep plans to bring us into collision with the State, so as to bring about our expulsion or extermination forthwith. It was agreed that none of the brethren leave the City at the Court, only those who are required to be there on business, so that we may prevent the mob from coming into the City and committing deprecations in the absence of the brethren. An article was

written by O. Hyde & W. Richards to publish in tomorrow's paper notifying the public of the designs of the mob ~~ab~~ and also the course we intend to pursue. The Council did not break up till 10¹/₄

Saturday 10 May 1845 ... P.M. met with the Council of Fifty and adjourned sine die. The adjournment was about in consequence of the Conduct of D.D. Yearsley of whom there is strong suspicions of treachery.

Saturday Sept. 7. 1845 ... Notified the members of the Council of Fifty to meet next Tuesday

Tuesday Sept. 9 1845 ... At 2 P.M. met in the upper room of the Seventies Hall with the Council of Fifty. The subject of sending a company of Saints to the West next spring was talked over, and the following motion of by W.W. Phelps—"Moved that the President select such a portion of this Council as he may choose to remove west, and they select and organize the company subject to the final revision of the President," a vote was taken and the motion was carried unanimously. The following motion was also put and carried unanimously "That a Committee of five be appointed to gather all information relative to imigration and impart the same to this Council, and those about to emigrate when called upon"

Thursday Sept 11, 1845. A.M. at the Office recording minutes of the Kingdom of God ... A selection has been made by Pres. Young of those of the Council of Fifty who shall start west next spring. My name is included in the list.

Tuesday Sept 30, 1845 Met the Council of Fifty at the Seventies Hall. Elders Bent Cutler & Cahoon presented their lists of families selected by them to go west. They have each got their companies nearly made up of one hundred families each. Pres. Young also appointed S. Roundy, J. Fielding, C.P. Lott, P. Haws and Daniel Spencer to select and organize each a company. Isaac Morley has got his company about full. While in Council report was brought in that two officers had just rode in-to town and had come to the Mansion. Pres. Young sent B.F. Johnson to find out what they were after. He soon returned and stated that they called for liquor but could get none. They then went to Packs but could get none there. They finally got some at Clapps and then went off in different directions. Word was brought in that an armed company were outside the City. Prest Young sent C.C. Rich to see what they wanted. He soon returned and reported that Gen. Hardin, Judge Douglas and the troops had arrived on the Square near the Temple, and that Douglas was at Elder Taylor's wanting to see the Twelve or the authorities of the place. The Council was immediately adjourned and the Twelve with one or two others went over to Elder Taylor's ... P.M. at the Office recording minutes of the Council of Fifty.

Saturday, October 4, 1845 ... At 9 O'Clock met with the Council of Fifty at the Seventies Hall and Kept minutes of the Council.

Sunday, October 5, 1845. At the Office all day recording minutes of the Council of Fifty.

Tuesday January 6, 1846 .. Evening went to notify some of the Council of Fifty to meet next Sunday morning.

Sunday January 11, 1846 ... A.M. in the Temple with the Council of Fifty, arranging to make an early start West

Sunday January 18, 1846. In the Temple with the Council of Fifty and also Captains of Companies.

As of 1 January 1845 all the special projects of the pre-martyrdom Council of Fifty had failed. The Council had not met in eight months. It had not revived itself to undertake any of the “measures of Joseph.” No California, Oregon, or Texas scouting parties materialized. The campaign for the Presidency of the United States was terminated not only before the election but even before a national convention. The mission among the Lamanites never got underway. William Clayton mentions all these failures in his 1845 New Year’s day entry. Then why is he so buoyant?

As important as each of these efforts by the Council were, they were, in Clayton’s mind, only secondary in importance to the spiritual-religious organization conceived by Joseph Smith. Clayton’s implicit faith in the divine nature of the Prophet’s revelations on the Council of Fifty overshadowed any earthly policies that the Council may have developed. It was the love of the principles espoused by Joseph Smith, principles the Council applied to policies, that enamoured William Clayton and bound him to the Prophet. The Council could accommodate changes and he felt the divinity of the Council’s principles were confirmed when they met new circumstances.

The Council of Fifty was frustrated in each of its attempts to prepare the way for the unhurried, systematic removal of the Saints from the presence of their enemies in and around Nauvoo. However, after three years’ struggle, the Council of Fifty achieved the “measures of Joseph” when Brigham Young entered the Salt Lake Valley on 24 July 1847. As William Clayton phrased it in his famous hymn, they found “the place which God . . . prepared, far away in the West, where none [would] come to hurt or make afraid; [w]here the Saints [would] be blessed.” And the Council achieved its goal within the time limit Joseph Smith had originally given:

[I prophesy] that within five years we [shall] be out of the power of our old enemies, whether they were apostates or of the world; and [I tell you] brethren to record it, that when it comes to pass [you] need not say [that you] had forgotten the saying.⁵⁴

⁵⁴Smith, *Teachings*, p. 333; the Wilford Woodruff Journal, 25 February 1844, is the original source for this prophecy.

This then is the legacy of Joseph Smith's Council of Fifty. Though it was conceived as the nucleus of a world government for the Millennium, through the flexibility of its own Constitution the Council assumed the less imposing role of locating the Saints in a less than ideal Zion. And when realities militated against the Council's fulfilling all of its plans, only individuals like William Clayton who remained as adaptable as the Council's Constitution could find consolation despite all the failures.

A LISTING OF THE DATES OF COUNCIL OF FIFTY MEETINGS

The following is a list of the 142 dates when the Council of Fifty met during its seven distinct periods of activity. An italicized date means that the meeting is verified by the official attendance rolls of the Kingdom of God. An asterisk indicates the dates during periods two, three, and seven of other meetings which are significant to but are not meetings of the Council of Fifty.

1. 1844—*Joseph Smith Council of Fifty Meetings*

Joseph Smith assigned the Twelve Apostles in February 1844 to organize and supervise an exploring party to the far West in order to find a new location for the Saints. He learned on 8 March 1844 that Lyman Wight and George Miller (when they were hundreds of miles from Nauvoo) had at the same time prepared letters suggesting that the Church move from Nauvoo to Texas. Consequently, when the Prophet decided to organize the Kingdom of God, he assigned these fifty men to manage these two exploring efforts preparatory to a final decision regarding a removal of the Church from Nauvoo. The Council of Fifty also assumed other projects likewise previously undertaken by Joseph Smith, namely, the campaign for the presidency of the United States and appeals to Congress for redress of the Saints' grievances concerning the Missouri expulsion in 1839. However, when the Prophet was killed on 27 June 1844, all "measures of Joseph" considered by the 1844 Council were tabled until the Council was reorganized seven months later on 4 February 1845.

10, 11, 12, 13, 14 ["adjourned til Tuesday 19 9 am" (JS-WR)], 19, 21, 26 March; 4, 11, 18, 25 ["sine die" (WC, JS-WR, and HC)] April; 3, 6 ["adjourned till to next Monday" (JS-WR)], 13, 25 ["adjrd to friday next" (JS-WR)], and 31 May 1844—17 meetings during this period.

2. 1845-1846—*Post-Martyrdom Nauvoo Council of Fifty Meetings*

Although the Council was reorganized 4 February 1845, it adjourned that day with only the vague anticipation that "at some future time" it would be filled up to its full complement of fifty members. However, one month later, as spring approached, Brigham Young reconvened the Council to fulfill his promise to carry out the "measures of Joseph." Following the March and April 1845 deliberations on the western expedition, the exploring party finally got away from Nauvoo. The Council then adjourned for four months. In September 1845, after part of the exploring party returned to give a preliminary report of their findings, the Council met and decided to send a settling party to the valley of the Great Salt Lake; after conducting this business it adjourned again. However, during the latter part of September, the anti-Mormons of Hancock County issued an ultimatum to the Saints requiring them to agree to leave the state in the spring of 1846. Consequently, the Council reconvened and planned for an organized evacuation of

Nauvoo. Then in January 1846, after an adjournment of three months, when word came from separate sources that Federal troops were on their way to prevent the Saints from leaving Nauvoo, the Council met in emergency sessions to prepare for an early move west. Because he believed this was a crisis situation, Brigham Young on 13 January 1846 invited the leaders of the wagon train companies, even though they were not members of the Council, to meet with the Council of Fifty in this emergency session. Because so many of the members of the Council were scattered along the trail leading west, Brigham Young convened several such “augmented” Council meetings during the 1846 trek west. (Although these meetings were clearly based on precedent established in Nauvoo, they were not Council of Fifty meetings. Because they were held during the trek west, and because they were significant “council” meetings, I have listed them during period three.) The Council last met in Nauvoo 18 January 1846 and, as shown by the single attendance roll that covers both the second and third periods of activity of the Council, the Council of Fifty did not meet again until 12 November 1846.

4 [“This is the first time we met since the massacre of Pres. Joseph . . . Smith” (WC); “It was voted to fill up the Council, at some future time” (WC)] February; 1, 4, 11, 18, 22, 25 [AML says Council adjourned to 5 April] March; 5 [HCK says they adjourned to 12 April, WC says 11 April, and WR says 10 April], 11 [“adjourned to Tuesday next” (WR)], 15, 18, 22, 29 April; 6, 10 [“adjourned sine die” (WC)] May; 9, 30 September; 4 [“adjourned at 2½ without date” (WR)] October 1845; 11, 13* [First “augmented” Council of Fifty meeting where at the conclusion of the meeting Brigham Young says: “The 50 to meet on Sunday at 10 [18 January 1846] and the whole [the “augmented” Council of Fifty to meet] on Monday at 10” (Minutes)], 18, 19* January 1846—20 meetings during this period.

3. 1846—*The Exodus Winters Quarters Council of Fifty Meetings*

Although Brigham Young convened the Council of Fifty in November 1846, he did not have any “business to lay before the Council.” However, at the 27 December 1846 meeting, the important yet obvious decision was made to send a pioneer company to the Salt Lake Valley in the spring of 1847. The Council then adjourned *sine die* until they could meet in the Valley. They did not reconvene until 6 December 1848, two months after Brigham Young’s second and final arrival in the Valley 20 September 1848.

30* [“Council adjourned to Thursday April 2nd” (WR). Members of the Council of Fifty are identified in the proceedings of these “Council” meetings] March; 2* [“council adjourned sine die” (WR and JDL)], 18* [“meeting adjourned Mon 10” (JDL)], 20*, 27*, 28* April; 20*, 21* May; 2*, 7* August; 12, 13 November; 25, 26, 27 [“These three days Council has been held . . . consisting of 30 to 40 persons” (HCK); “council haveing [*sic*] been adjourned sine die from Winter Quarters, and to be at the call of the first Presidency in the Valley” (Orson Hyde during trial of Peter Haws and Lucien Woodworth, 6 January 1849, Pottawattomie

High Council Minute Book, p. 132); "adjourned sine die" (GM)] December 1846—5 meetings during this period.

4. 1848–1850—*"Legislative Council" or Provisional State of Deseret (Salt Lake City) Council of Fifty Meetings*

In terms of concentration and involvement, no other period of activity of the Council of Fifty rivals this golden era. Yet for all its accomplishments during this "Provisional State of Deseret" period, the Council of Fifty retired itself seven months before Brigham Young took the oath of office as governor of Utah Territory on 3 February 1851 and fifteen months before the Territorial Legislature first officially sat in session 22 September 1851.

6, 9, 16, 23 December 1848; 6, 20 January; 3, 9, 17, 24 February; 3, 4, 10, 17, 31 March; 5, 14, 28 April; 12, 26 May; 2, 16, 30 June; 2, 7, 11, 15, 19, 21 July; 4, 11, 18, 25, 29 August; 6, 8, 12, 22, 29 September; 5, 10, 13, 20, 27 October; 3, 10 [There was probably a meeting of the Council of Fifty on this date though I have no evidence for it.], 17 November; 22 December 1849; 12 ["adjourned" (TB)], 26 January; 9, 16, 23 February; 30 ["adjourned to last Saturday in June at 1 P.M." (TB)] March; and 29 ["18 present adjourned until State House is ready, to meet at call of B.Y." (TB)] June 1850—56 meetings during this period.

5. 1851—*The 1851 Utah Territory Council of Fifty Meetings*

On 1 January 1845, William Clayton wrote in his journal that Joseph Smith taught the Council of Fifty the ancient plan of how the "restoration of Union and peace" amongst officials of the Government of God could be achieved. Theoretically, if members of the Council of Fifty could not fellowship one another, their deliberations would be fruitless. If they were at odds one with another they would be unable to be the "Spokesmen of God," even if they ostensibly followed the rules of the Kingdom. The positive advantages of strict privacy regarding Council of Fifty deliberations, then, provided assurance to Council members that they could, without fear of exposure or public ridicule, freely and fully express their hesitancy or bad feelings for other Council members. Joseph Smith's belief that such complete fellowship had to exist between members of the legislature of the Kingdom of God impelled him to institute what I call "Fellowship of the Council" meetings. So while it may appear that these 1851 meetings were the Council's last gasp to return to its golden era, a one last attempt to seize control of the Territory despite the presence of the unwanted gentile officials, actually Utah Territorial business and tensions regarding the first officials were completely ignored in these meetings. These 1851 meetings were originally convened to restore fellowship between certain Council members and not to discuss Utah Territorial affairs. Following the 4 October 1851 meeting, the Council adjourned and did not meet until 1867.

21, 22, 23 [these three meetings were Fellowship of the Council meetings], 25, 30 August; 13 September; 4 [nine are present for A.M. session—no quorum is available for the P.M. session: “on motion adjourned to the call of the President” [Minutes provide the dates for all the meetings during this period] October 1851—7 meetings during this period.

6. 1867-1868—*Utah Territory Council of Fifty Meetings:
1867 Renewal*

The 1867 renewal of the Council of Fifty after fifteen years of inactivity must be seen as a subset of Brigham Young's renewal of Joseph Smith's many faceted program of “Zion.” Apparently anticipating that with the completion of the railroad in 1869 Babylon would encroach itself on Zion in an unprecedented way, Brigham Young not only renewed Joseph Smith's concept of the Kingdom of God, but also he began to take steps to revitalize the School of the Prophets, the Relief Society, and the United Order. He created Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Association (ZCMI), and he performed again the Fulness of the Priesthood Ordinances. All these other elements of “Zion” had not been functioning for at least twenty years. This resurgence was intended to fortify the Church from the influences of forces without. Unlike other programs receiving renaissance beginning with this new era of the Church in 1867, the Council of Fifty was not a substantive stabilizing force within the Church. For example, even ZCMI, commonly considered a product of the Council of Fifty, was a project adopted by the Council three days *after* the Saints publicly accepted the program in general conference. Since the Council of Fifty did not meet again for nearly twelve years after the 9 October 1868 meeting when it “absorbed” this project, it was not the agency that implemented nor managed ZCMI. Moreover, before the next meeting of the Council in 1880, the decline of the cooperative effort was irreversibly set and the Council did nothing to prevent its extinction in 1882.

23 [“The clerk reported thirteen members died since the last meeting of the Council on the 4th. October 1851; . . . [Brigham Young] stated that he was not aware of any particular business to be brought before the Council, further than to meet and renew our acquaintance with each other in this capacity” (Minutes)], 25 January; 5 April; 5, 10 October 1867; 4, 9 [“The Council of 50 Met but adjourned without doing Business” (WW)] April; 9 October 1868—8 meetings during this period of activity.

7. 1880-1884—*Utah Territory Council of Fifty Meetings:
1880 Renewal*

As seen by this chronology, the Council of Fifty during the 1880s was not a significant catalyst of Church involvement in politics. Furthermore, even when the Council operated as caucus of and private political machinery behind the Church's political party—the People's

Party—the Council’s efforts were narrow and limited. That the Church leadership was the real power behind the People’s Party is supported by the fact that the party continued to function for nearly seven years *after* the last meeting of the Council of Fifty on 9 October 1884.

10 [“Meeting adj. until 21st April 1880” (Minutes)], 21 [“Adj. Oct. 5. 1880” (Minutes)] April; 5 [“Adjourned till next Tuesday Morning at 10 oclock” (Minutes)], 12 [“Adjourned till April 5th 1881” (Minutes)] October 1880; 5, 8 April; 18 May; 4 October 1881; 4, 5, April; 21, 22, 23 [“adjourned till 10 a.m. tomorrow” (Minutes)], 24, 26, 27 [“adjourned till call of the President” (FDR and JHS)] June; 10, 11 [“adjourned till 9 April or till Call” (FDR)]; 10, 11 [“adjourned till 27th June at 2 pm” (RTB)] April; 27, 28, 29 [“adjourned to Oct. 3–2 p.m. unless on call by the President” (FDR)] June; 6* [special meeting of the First Presidency and the members of the Council of Fifty who resided in the Salt Lake County area]; 3 [“adjourned till the 10th instant at 10–a.m.” (FDR)], 10 [“Council adjourned to Jan 12–1884–10 a.m.” (FDR) October 1883; 12 [“adjourned till call of the President” (FDR)] January; 8 [“adjourned . . . sine die or until called by the President” (FDR)] April; 8, 9 October 1884; and, 4* February 1885—29 meetings were held during this period.”

⁵⁵The following is the key to the abbreviations used in the preceding listing. The abbreviations are arranged in alphabetical order according to the first initial. The following sources are available in the Church Archives: AML—Amasa M. Lyman Journal; FDR—Franklin D. Richards Diary; HCK—Heber C. Kimball Diary; JDL—John D. Lee Diary; JS—WR—Joseph Smith Journal kept by Willard Richards; PR—Phineas Richards Journal; RTB—Robert Taylor Burton Journal; TB—Thomas Bullock Diary kept as the Historian’s Office Journal; WC—William Clayton Journal; WR—Willard Richards Diary; and WW—Wilford Woodruff Journal. The following source is available in the George A. Smith Family Papers, Western Americana, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah: JHS—John Henry Smith Journal, photocopy of holograph. Minutes—Minutes of the Council of Fifty. Two published sources were also referred to in this listing: HC—Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, and GM—Letter of George Miller to the *Northern Islander*, 1 July 1855. The attendance rolls used in compiling this information are as follows: “1845/Apl 22 to Dec 27 [1846] Roll—K. of G.” in the hand of William Clayton; “Roll of Names of members of the Kingdom of God, sitting from Decr 6, 1848 to Mch 4. 49 inc.” in the hand of William Clayton; Roll in the hand of William Clayton for the period of 10 March–3 November 1849; Roll in the hand of William Clayton for the period of 23 January 1867–9 October 1868; and “Roll of Council” for 8 April 1881–23 June 1882 in the hand of L. John Nuttall.

THE UPPER CALIFORNIA, O! THAT'S THE LAND FOR ME

John Taylor

The Upper California, O! that's the land for me,
It lies between the Mountains and great Pacific Sea:
The Saints can be supported there;
And taste the sweets of liberty,
In Upper California. O! that's the land for me.
O! that's, &c. O! that's, &c.

We'll go and lift our standard, we'll go there and be free,
We'll go to California and have our jubilee,
A land that blooms with endless spring,
A land of life and liberty,
With flocks and herds abounding. O that's the land for me.
O! that's, &c. O! that's, &c.

We'll burst off all our fetters and break the Gentile yoke;
For long it has beset us, but now it shall be broke;
No more shall Jacob bow his neck;
Henceforth he shall be great and free,
In Upper California. O! that's the land for me.
O! that's, &c. O! that's, &c.

We'll reign, we'll rule, and triumph, and God shall be our king,
The plains, the hills and vallies shall with hosannas ring,
Our tow'rs and temples there shall rise
Along the great Pacific sea,
In Upper California. O! that's the land for me.
O! that's, &c. O! that's, &c.

We'll ask our cousin Lemuel to join us heart and hand:
And spread abroad our curtains throughout fair Zion's land.
Till this is done, we'll pitch our tents,
Along the great Pacific Sea;
In Upper California. O! that's the land for me.
O! that's, &c. O! that's, &c.

Then join with me my brethren, and let us hasten there;
We'll lift our glorious standard and raise our house of prayer.
We'll call on all the nations round,
To join our standard and be free,
In Upper California. O! that's the land for me.
O! that's, &c. O! that's, &c.

John Taylor, HYMN 290, *Sacred Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Europe*, 9th ed. rev. and enlarged (Liverpool: F.D. Richards, 1851), pp. 352–54. The Great Basin area east of the Sierra Nevada, where the Saints finally settled, was then known as the Upper California.